Trivandrum port came next in activity after Alleppey, Quilon third and Colachel last. In 1103 Colachel suddenly leapt forward to second position after Alleppey, Trivandrum coming next and Quilon last. There is an explanation for this sudden rise of Colachel and for the set-back to Quilon. The tonnage at Colachel rose from 42,095 in 1102 to 78,034 in 1103, while the number of steamships rose from 12 to 24. As between 1927 and 1928 there was an increase of about 45,000 tons of which nearly 30,000 tons represented ocean-going vessels and 15,000, coasting steamers. This sudden growth in Colachel port is due to larger exports of ilmenite and zircon sands, for the export of which revised arrangements were recently made with the principal firm working these sands to enable them to meet the growing demand. Quilon port languished owing to larger shipments of salt from South Travancore being diverted from that port to Alleppey and to the transport of salt by road as also owing to the growing reluctance of merchants to ship tiles and import iron, hardware and rice for want of landing and shipping facilities.

The Alleppey "mud-bank."

9. Some apprehension was felt over a phenomenon which has not been previously unknown at Alleppey port. In August last, following upon heavy seas and strong littoral currents from the south-west, there settled round about the pier some of the fine oily mud which is always in a state of suspension off and along the Alleppey coast and which ensures its smooth waters. This shoaling of the fine mud made it necessary at low tide for loaded cargo boats to be hauled out by mechanical means from the head of the pier into deep water through what I might call an emulsion extending a few hundred feet. Shipping was in no way hampered and by the end of the year conditions became normal.

Advantageous Situation of the Travancore Ports.

10. Before I pass from the subject of ports and shipping I may mention as a matter of general interest that the Travancore ports possess one great advantage because of their situation in relation to the ocean highways traversed by shipping between Colombo, Europe, America, Australia and the Far East with special reference to the Suez Canal. Ships need make only a slight deviation from their set course to touch India at one of the Travancore ports. For instance, Colachel is only nine miles off the main ocean route, Trivandrum only fourteen, Quilon only twenty-three and Alleppey only forty-five miles. Also apart from the time saved by the shortness of the detour, the period of stay can be brief as ships can enter a port, anchor within easy distance of the shore and stand out to the open sea again soon after loading.

Forests.

11. The natural regeneration of valuable species of timber was satisfactory. Artificial reproduction of teak under the Taungya system was equally encouraging. The year witnessed the largest out-turn in the exploitation of timber during the past quinquennium. Over a million

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cubic feet of timber were extracted from the forests yielding a revenue of nearly Rs. 14 lakhs. The work of forest conservancy went on effectively with the result that the revenue of the department has been steadily on the increase during the past five years. The net revenue during 1103 was Rs. 7·60 lakhs or Rs. 304 per square mile of forests under the control of the department, a yield of roughly.8 annas per acre. But the State forests have not merely a direct revenue value. Although the theory that forests induce rain is now discredited, there is little doubt that forest lands retain water and feed rivers and streams thus contributing to the fertility of the surrounding country.

Excise.

12. I told you last year that the Government had decided to start the interesting experiment of local option at Changanachery. The cardinal principle underlying a decision as to such social restrictive measures as local option is that a small majority should not be allowed to impose its will upon an unwilling large minority. A conviction registered by fifty per cent or a little more is not decisive as it shows opinion to be almost evenly divided. Government cannot act in favour of one side when the scales are so evenly balanced. The majority should unmistakably express the decisive will of the people. In that event the minority can properly be regarded as negligible and their opposition can justifiably beloverborne. A majority vote of 75 per cent of the municipal voters was, therefore, fixed by the Government for a decision on the question and the Municipal President has been asked to arrange for the recording of votes. The action of Government will depend on the results of the voting.

Legislative Council.

13. The second Council convened under Regulation II of 1097 was dissolved last year and the third Council met for the first time towards the close of the year. The total number of electors was 140,331 or an increase of 17,881 over the number for the previous election in 1101. Of these 56 per cent actually polled in 22 out of the 28 constituencies where polling was necessary. In the Trivandrum town constituency and in the general rural constituencies, 58 per cent of the electors voted. The highest percentage of voters was in the North Commerce and Industries constituency, *viz.*, 89. These figures provide an index to the growing interest taken by the people generally in public affairs.

Police.

14. In my address last year I referred to the increase in motor traffic and to the good work done by the new Traffic Inspectors. With the rapidly increasing number of motor vehicles the problem of road traffic is becoming more difficult. Government feel with the Police Department that the present staff is inadequate to cope with the problem. Proposals for the organisation of a separate traffic branch of the department with an adequate and efficient controlling staff are being made

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